

and the Nation to achieve important goals in health care, aging issues, and agriculture. His accomplishments have been remarkable, and will be recognized for many years. I have been deeply honored to serve with my distinguished colleague Senator PRYOR, and wish him every happiness and good health in the years to come.

SENATOR SAM NUNN

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to one of the Senate's most respected and accomplished Senators, SAM NUNN of Georgia. Despite the counsel of Democrats, Republicans, and even the President to seek an assured and well deserved fifth term, Senator NUNN has decided to retire from the Senate at the end of the 104th Congress.

Clearly, Senator NUNN's departure is this Chamber's loss. As anyone who has attended or testified before a hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee over the last 24 years is well aware, there is no member on Capitol Hill today who understands defense issues better than the Senior Senator from Georgia. Throughout his nearly two and a half decades on the Armed Services Committee and 10 years as its chairman or ranking member, Senator NUNN has been routinely consulted by Senators—including this one—when particularly difficult and complex issues have been before the Senate. With little doubt, few Senators in the history of this distinguished body have shown Senator NUNN's acumen for balancing Congress' prerogative to raise and support our Armed Forces with respect for the judgment of our military's leadership.

Mr. President, in his capacity as chairman and ranking member of the Armed Services Committee and as a member of this Chamber, my friend from Georgia has conducted his career in the best tradition of the Senate. The reputation of Senator NUNN's committee for bipartisanship is due in part to the leadership of the Georgia Senator. Better than most, SAM NUNN has understood that compromise is absolutely essential if the Senate is to function as effectively and fairly as the American people expect, and deserve.

Although I do not expect it to last, Senator NUNN's departure from the national stage will be the Nation's loss. His influence has been apparent in the policies of every administration since the senior Senator from Georgia was elected to this body in 1972, and has been especially evident over the last decade. Since the end of the cold war, Senator NUNN has guided the reorganization and reduction of our global military posture, effectively balancing the necessity to maintain forces appropriate for an increasingly complex threat environment, with the need to put our fiscal house in order. Senator NUNN's participation in a bipartisan budget coalition testifies to his commitment to the cause of responsible

deficit reduction, and it has been my honor and privilege to work with him toward this important end.

Mr. President, Senator NUNN has established the benchmark for sound leadership, and I have no doubt that his influence will continue to be felt once he leaves the Senate. As my friend from Georgia is aware, there has been speculation for years that he would one day become Secretary of Defense or Secretary of State. But as many of his colleagues have knowingly observed, Senator NUNN has long exercised influence on defense matters worthy of the Secretary's job itself. I wish Senator NUNN the very best as he begins a new chapter of his life. As a Senator and citizen, I offer my sincere thanks to the Georgia Senator for his excellent service, for which we are all better off. I know that I speak for all Senators when I say that Senator SAM NUNN will be sorely missed, but never forgotten.

TRIBUTE TO ALAN SIMPSON

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, the Senate this year will lose a long-time friend, ALAN SIMPSON of Wyoming. Senator SIMPSON has served his state well for three decades, including 18 years in this chamber, and 12 years before that in Wyoming's House of Representatives. As many here know, he was raised in politics: his father Milward was a former governor and U.S. Senator.

While I congratulate Senator SIMPSON on his retirement, I also have to say I am sorry to see him go. As members of different parties, we have not always seen eye to eye. But even in those times I have disagreed strongly with him, I have always been impressed by his passion. He is a formidable opponent, and any Senator who challenges him better be fully versed on the issue and ready for a tough debate. Because ALAN SIMPSON is always ready. This smart, principled legislator also possesses a unique sense of humor that can inject laughter into even the most difficult situations. And on many issues, such as the current immigration debate which he has led in the Senate, he has shown a willingness to find a bipartisan solution to our mutual problems.

In a Congress that has become increasingly more partisan, many of Senator SIMPSON's colleagues in both chambers and on both sides of the aisle, would do well to heed his example. Compromise and cooperation are seen by some as a lack of leadership. But the "my way or the highway" attitude often short-changes the American people. Senator SIMPSON's willingness to achieve solutions for the greater good is the embodiment of leadership.

On the Senate Finance Committee, Senator SIMPSON and I have examined some of the most pressing issues before us; reduction of our national debt and the future of entitlement programs like Social Security, Medicare, Medic-

aid, and veterans' benefits. As colleagues on the bipartisan Centrist Coalition we worked together to find a fair and reasonable solution to reducing the deficit and controlling the growth of entitlements, when the White House and congressional leaders reached an impasse.

Anyone who works with him on these issues knows without a doubt that Senator SIMPSON cares as deeply about the future of our country as anyone in Congress. Federal spending on entitlement programs is growing at an alarming rate, but suggesting change to entitlement programs is considered political suicide by some. But that has never stopped Senator SIMPSON. His work on the Bipartisan Commission on Entitlement and Tax Reform confirms that he is willing to advocate tough solutions to these growing problems. I may disagree with some of his conclusions, but the fight to reform these programs, as well as the fight to reach a fair balanced budget, is ongoing. I am saddened that he is not staying on to help lead these fights. But perhaps in the coming years, all of us in Congress will learn to embody the virtues of courage and leadership that we have seen in ALAN SIMPSON.

RETIREMENT OF SENATOR NANCY KASSEBAUM

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, today, I offer tribute to my friend and colleague, Senator Nancy KASSEBAUM. The Senate will miss this respected and fair minded policy maker. While the distinguished Senator from Kansas may no longer physically be present on the floor of the Senate to fight the battles she believes in, she will leave a legacy of intelligence, honesty, and common sense that will always be respected and never forgotten.

Among her many accomplishments, Senator KASSEBAUM will go down in the textbooks of American history as the first woman to Chair a major Senate committee, the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources. This fact makes a statement about the strength of Nancy KASSEBAUM as a leader. Senator KASSEBAUM successfully challenged institutional gender biases, paving the way for other women who aspire to become powerful Members of the Senate. I compliment Senator KASSEBAUM for this significant accomplishment.

Throughout her 18 years of dedicated service as a member of the Senate and her tenure as Chair of the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources, Senator KASSEBAUM has fought to preserve the health and dignity of America's families, children, and the poor. She was a moderating force throughout the welfare debate. Her strong stance on issues such as ensuring abused and neglected children are protected, increasing the availability of child care for low-income families, and preserving child care health and safety standards was a key to the successful passage of